

... PAR SECTION ... NO 4

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EDITORIAL

It would seem that Claude Degler was/is more of a factor in fandom than anyone has yet hinted. Joe's piece last issue brought response from almost every corner. Degler was obviously a person of multiple facets.

As Claude is passed and gone his history can now be judged. This is difficult. Fandom's inquisitioners did an effective job of erasing most of Degler's contributions.

It is known, however, that he was both envied and pitied, loved and hated, respected and feared, elevated and scorned. The man was fantastic.



Don Wollheim sent me a letterhead used by the Cosmic Circle. It is lithographed on a fine grade of bond, typed with an IBM electric using a milar ribbon, contains justified margins, and doesn't have any typos. This letterhead is far superior to any used by Life or SatEvePost. It reads thusly...COSMIC CIRCLE * Planet Fantasy Federation...(under this is a blurb)..."A World Wide Organization of Cosmic Minded Men and Women". There follows a list of the Circle's officers and the addresses of their offices. Don Rogers is the Ambassador At Large. Claude, with his usual modesty, omits his name and simply lists his address under the heading of CIRCLE CENTRAL OFFICE.

That Degler should have remained in fandom after the Circle picked up impetus is a factor that is disturbing (the Circle listed well over 3 thousand members at one time). Possibly he was trying to convert his nemesis. This can be roughly compared to a priest trying to convert the Barbary Pirates. (Not comparing Degler with a priest by any means.)

Where did the Circle get its seemingly unexhaustable funds? Why did Degler put out a fannish crudzine when other work contemporary of the time bordered on perfection? Why did Degler suddenly drop out of fandom? It's all very confusing.

Joe seems to have described him best when he said "...you had to reach him every time he came passed, for there was no orbit."

Claude Degler is presently residing in Los Angeles. The Cosmic Circle is undoubtedly still being published and simply passes unnoticed among the cult pelf that permeates that city. Maybe someday the growing boil will explode and leave Palmer's Deros shuddering in microscopic proportion. You will remember that Degler promised a war in fandom. He wasn't (isn't) the kind of man who goes back on his word.

The rumors are flying again. Degler is back. He subs to JD-A. He has called the Circle's members together in one great union of Cosmic Awareness. They may even now be plotting to telepethically overthrow SF fandom as a way of life (horror of horrors).

From among the ranks of men not easily swayed by rumors steps BNF Buck Coulson. He has felt the chill of this possibility and in utter desperation has proposed the following peace offering to the Cosmic Circle....
DEGLER FOR TAFF!

EDITOR and PUBLISHER,
George C Willick

CORRESPONDING EDITOR,
Donald A Wollheim

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR,
Joe L Hensley

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Leonard Rich



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Contributions solicited, immediately.

ARS GRATIA EGOROO

by ROG EBERT
410 E Washington
Urbana, Illinois

After snarling unheard in the clammy dens of ALTISSIMO CATAMOUNT, HOCUS, and STYMIE, this column and its award-winning title finally comes to light betwixt the loving arms of George Willick and his feckless PAR-SECTION. The arrangement, I trust, is fairly stable. So when you trust your newest masterpiece to the mails in trade for PAR, please send me a review copy as well.

My point rating system, destined to replace Charles Goren in fandom as well as bridge, has fallen beneath the outraged howls of anti-mathematical fen. So, in surrender, I shall rate the fanzines by the age-old Coulson one-to-ten system.



CAMBER #12 (Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts., England Irregular. 15d. 48 pp.) ...Dodd has pulled off a scoop in the new Camber which most American faneds would give their eyeteeth for; an article by Bob Bloch on the movie Psycho. Besides revealing that the film is Paramount's largest money-maker since The Ten Commandments, Bloch recalls that he sold the rights to the novel sight unseen... he didn't know until later that the buyer was Hitchcock... and he gets no percentage of the fabulous box-office receipts. He also explains his reasons for moving to Hollywood and doing TV scripts, denies that his stories could stimulate real-life "psychos" to commit similar crimes, and argues the thesis that he is not really a vampire. One of the most interesting behind the scenes articles of the year.

The rest of Camber is equally interesting, if not as exclusive as the Bloch piece. Dodd claims that this took him more time and effort than any of the first eleven, and the finished product indicates that this is possible. Bound in stiff covers featuring artwork by Prosser and Cawthorne, Camber is especially strong in art this issue. Most of the best of it is by George Metzger, who contributes two hilarious full-page drawings and a well done fannish comic sequence.

Dodd rips apart Hitchcock's version of Psycho, Mike Deckinger has a piece on midnight horror show hosts, Ray Thompson returns after a two year interval from fandom with a rather sercon discussion of selfdetermination in the face of propaganda, Deckinger returns with a belated review of the FU Omnibus, and Craig Cochran and Arcie Mercer round out an excellent issue with fiction and faaan poetry.

RATING...9

DISCORD #9 (Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland Place N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota. Six-weekly, for trade or comment)...Boggs has a new masthead for the most distinctive fanzine in fandom, designed by Richard Bergeron. It completes the faultless appearance of Discord, and confirms my suspicion that he wasn't going to stick to his lousy old logo forever. Lead article this issue is a hilarious study of the ludicrous headlines on Movie fan magazines. After a more-or-less sercon kick in Discord, it's welcome. Boggs also contributed a thoughtful re-evaluation of David Keller's work, and presents a new and perhaps valid criticism of it that should stir up some controversy by old time fen. Letters...including a vehement assertion by Bob Farnham that he was only kidding in his anti-Negro letter last issue round out the zine. Rating 9

WARHOON (Richard Bergeron, 110 Bank St, New York City 14, NY. Bi-monthly, 42pp., 20¢ or comment)...Currently the most intelligently edited publication in fandom, Bergeron's Warhoon is rapidly doing what many fen have claimed could never be done on a sustained basis; presenting thought provoking articles on the national and international scene by good fan writers. Mixed in with the politics, of course, are entertaining personal essays, letters, SAPSzine reviews and editorials. But the sercon columns of John Berry, Walt Willis, and Col. Proctor Scott form the basis upon which the personality of the zine is built. Bergeron's major contribution this, a description of a visit to a butterfly shop, is very well done in a NYCkerish style. The Berry piece is semi-humorous, but still very revealing in showing what he can do, given a subject to sink his typer into. Too often the best Berry work has been about almost micro-elite topics; in Wrhn, he discusses the Polaris missile and demonstrates that he can reduce it to size, too. Willis, whose "Harp That Once or Twice" is now appearing here, has a widespread American audience for his opinions...it should come in handy with the newly announced Void Willis Fund. In #10, he begins by refuting Gregg Calkin's views on "Starship Trooper", and then applies Heinlein's philosophy to the current world situation. Scott also has a case against Calkins. It's hard to believe this is a SAPSzine. No offense intended, of course, but... Rating 10

TAU CETI REPRINTS #1 (Bob Tucker, Box 702, Bloomington, Ill. Monthly? 8pp)...This is billed as a FAPA publication, but apparently is available to general fandom on a firstcomefirst basis. The first issue is a detailed facsimile of the 1935 first issue of "Science Fiction Bibliography", issued by the "Science Fiction Syndicate" in Austin, Texas. The syndicate, Tucker says in a footnote, was made up of William L Crawford and D R Welch, and the "Bibliography" was a listing of miscellaneous SF and fannish type publications which they had for sale. As a historical item, this is extremely interesting to neo (i.e., the last 15 years) No Rating

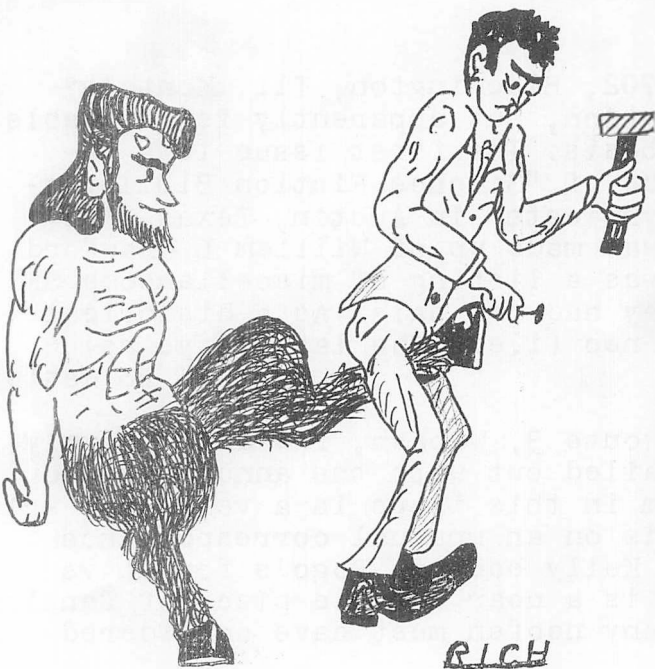
YANDRO #96 (Buck and Jaunita Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana. Monthly, 42pp., 20¢)...An outstanding annish, mailed out with the annual Yandro fannish calendar. Most interesting item in this issue is a very well written semi-humorous piece by Maggie Curtis on an unusual correspondence carried on between her family and Walt Kelly back in Pogo's formative years. Bob Tucker's "Late News; Final" is a near classic piece of fannish fiction that explores the hypothesis many neofen must have considered

during their first days in fandom: is there any limit to the awesome powers of the more-than-mortal BNFs? Gene Dewese contributes a hilarious movie review, Giovanni Scognomillo has a profile of George Melies ...the father of SF films...and I contribute a story. The lettercol is alive with what is apparently only the first faint grumblings of a major controversy over Mike Deckinger's story in #95, "Revelation". The tide seems to be running against Deckinger's story but a phalanx of liberals will probably come pounding to his rescue in the next issue. Promises to outdo the National Rifle Assn. as a lettercol subject. A very entertaining and ambitious issue, especially recommended to newcomers. RATING...8

PILIKIA #4 (Chuck Devine, 922 Day Drive, Boise, Idaho. Bi-monthly. 22pp. 30 Green Stamps or comment) ...Thish has Pilikia's best cover to date, by Mike Johnson. The repro and detail contribute to its effectiveness, and the picture of the almost-human robot in a "The Thinker" pose is well worth the 30 Green Stamps. By itself. The rest of the issue, while showing great improvement over the first Devine productions, is still rather unexciting. Chuck's editorial is rather neoish; a long ballad by John Melville could have been shorter; and a good art section suffers somewhat from repro problems. Most of the art is clear enough, however, to be appreciated, and all of it is good. RATING...4

//////Pill's two subbers are Joe Hensley and myself. Like Joe, I also judge fanzines by their "feel". Consequently I would never rate Pill lower than 6. GCW//////

VOID #23 (Ted White, 107 Christopher, New York 14. Monthly again. 32pp. 25¢, contribution, or comment) ...This is probably the best single issue of Void ever published, even counting the gargantuan Vannish. Dedicated to the very valid proposition that fandom needs Walt Willis to attend its 1962 Convention (preferably in Chicago), Void presents a Willisish with material by, about, and for him. Possibly the best thing in the issue is not by Willis himself, but by White, whose Gambit is an amusing reflection on the influence a BNF can have upon a sincere but confused neo. John Berry contributes one of his best pieces, a profile of Willis reprinted from a 1955 GRUE; Lee Hoffman recalls her first contact with WAW, and the resulting historic Willis column in SLANT; Bob Shaw has a short but very funny account of a meeting with Willis; and Willis himself has an article about his last ten years in fandom that should be sealed in the Immortal Halls of Mirth. Pete Graham closes the issue with "Another Look at the Harp Stateside". Whether or not you plan to do without bus tokens to bring Willis over, you should get this copy and save it. It was produced secretly, and certainly gets the Willis Fund off to a flying start. (Contributions sent to Larry Shaw, 16 Grant Pl., Staten Island 6, NY)



RATING...10

KIPPLE #9 (Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridens Dr., Baltimore 12, Maryland. Monthly, 52pp., 15¢)...Kipple has grown, almost overnight, into one of the most ambitious new fan publishing ventures. A monthly 50 page schedule probably can't be sustained, of course, but a lousy 25 pages of Kipple-type material should do nicely. Pauls himself is a very good writer, which is fortunate since he claims he's having trouble finding contributions. This issue he prints his own "Conversation With Joe Neophan", which is good but overlong; does competent reviews that sometimes have a tendency to be carried away with discussions of his own opinions on fmz reviewing; and a new prozine review column. Both the fan and the prozine review columns exhibit a strong tendency to be constructive sercon which is also rather entertaining. Pauls is serious, but he isn't nauseating. If he sometimes grows a little self-conscious and feels the need to defend his reviewing methods, there's nothing wrong in this. A fmz such as Kipple is becoming fills a definite place in fandom, and the fact that it is edited by someone who 1) doesn't mind being disagreeable and critical; and 2) does not do this in the belligerent manner of Bob Jennings; makes for an interesting combination. Other material in the big ninth issue includes a drawn-out symposium on comic books by Jaunita Coulson, Carl Brandon, Len Moffatt, and Harlan Ellison; Ruth Berman's evaluation of Christopher Morley; a very fine round-robin story by Marian Zimmer Bradley and Redd Boggs; Uffish Thots by Ted White; and various other items including an inexplicable article by Harrison Brown and James Real titled "The Effects of Nuclear Weapons".

Also received but not squeezed into thish's reviews: The Vinegar Worm, Monday Evening Ghost, Flush, Dynatron, Zymurgy, Bhismi'llah, Que Pasado?, Fanfaronade, Karma, Esprit, Dafce, Efanescant, Sathanas, Psi Phi, The Golden Apple, Esoterique, Si-Fan, Hyphen, Savoyard, and Fanac.

...Rog Ebert

WOLLHEIM ON ESKIMO DOMES

Why do the Eskimos build domes? Well, now, that's because in old Hyperborea, before the axis tilted, the temples of the Sun Masters were always in the form of cups, to represent the inverted drinking cup that the God Waugh put down after quaffing the sky. The Eskimos, being the decadent descendents of their servant class, the ancestors also of the Burmese, have forgotten everything but that one tradition hangs on. The smiling Burmese ascribe other things to it. And the frowning Ashanti also remember it, but build their domes in scorn of the ancient Hyperboreans whom they loathed and fought. It represents contempt for them. Even in our lore, when a European turns his cup down, it means that he's through with his drink, an unconscious reflection of a now forgotten prayer for the souls of the lost Hyperborean monarchs.

See?

PIE IN THE SF SKY

by

Sid Birchby

There was an American tourist in Moscow who won a hundred thousand rubles on a TV quiz show. Next day they shot him for being a capitalist.

All right, we will now translate that into Fanspeak.

There was a certain fan who once had a sense of wonder. This helped him to become filthy rich. Next day he stopped wondering and started to worrying how to stay rich. Every time he bought the "Wall Street Journal" another SF magazine folded up. Sad.

And we might now stop talking in allegories.

Magazine SF got going in the twenties, although there were the brave pioneers, I have heard, as far back as 1915. Nevertheless, despite "Munsey Magazine", Argosy, and Wierd Tales, it's fairly true to say that in the Beginning there was Gernsback. The formative period of magazine SF was from 1926 when Amazing Stories started to 1933 when the Street and Smith Astounding Stories of Super Science started. In other words, the period from the start of the Depression to its lowest point. Note that 1929 was only nominally the start of the Depression, and that, as any book on the period will show, the social unrest, the strikes, and the general air of Gotterdammerung started before then.

I am trying to suggest that magazine SF got going during a time when a lot of little people were wondering what was going to go wrong next, and were ready to grab at anything to read that was upbeat. For that reason, SF gave them the feeling that maybe things could be a lot better if Man only had Science. This was reflected in many of the stories of the period. The chief motif then was not, as it is now, space travel (some say nuclear war), but the eccentric professor and his wonderful invention. Authors speculated, perhaps with sighs of longing, on how the crumbling Western society could be shored up if only there were new Edisons, new Teslas, new Hicks' inventions with Kicks. Magazine SF, it seems clear, developed at Magazine SF Time.

The next period neatly marked out was 1933 to 1939. New Deal, Brains Trust, Technocracy, and Ruthless Roosevelt. It looked, to a lot of people, as if the West (though nobody called it the West, of course) was indeed pulling out of the Depression, and some of the credit could be assigned to the sort of technical innovation and use of scientific knowledge that Magazine SF had been plugging. But there still wasn't a lot of money about. The average man was still licking the wounds in his bank account, if he was lucky enough to have one, or just turning the corner

on hard times if he hadn't. There was still a lot for him to dream and yearn after. And because SF still held out the promise of better things for him, he could identify himself with the stories. He could think: "If this story were true, then one day soon I could have TV, or a personal robot, or make a million from Martian jewels in time to pay off the mortgage."

Phase three; 1939 to 1945. The time when SF couldn't lose. All it had to do was mark time, exploiting the twin theme of War and Technology. The latter was upsurging wildly due to the war, and the industrial trainee who was learning how to make, let's say, aero engines better than the Nazis liked to think that one day the same know-how would usher in a wonderful postwar world in which he would be able to get back to the real job of living. Magazine SF was still up-beat with respect to this feeling and it was still Steam Engine Time.

It gradually ceased to be so during the period from 1945 to the first Sputnik. True, the war brought along great inventions and some of them even made things better for the man in the street. SF had been right about that. But there was a growing disillusion with science, chiefly because of the nuclear threat. The Sputnik, which finally proved that the West had fallen behind, temporarily, in scientific knowhow, was the symbol which showed that SF was a god that had failed. Apparently.

And from then until 1960 the average man said, "To hell with dreams of the great future that science can bring my grandchildren. The only thing that matters is what's in it for me. The general outlook is that science will blow us all up tomorrow, so I'll eat, drink, and be merry, and I'll be doing OK. I will say to hell with my dreams, too. I have TV, I have a house full of robots, and I don't have to pay off the mortgage. It's fashionable to have one now! My last remaining dream...flying to the Moon...has turned sour. SF is no longer up-beat for me."

Prospects? Well and truly shot for the old type SF...so long as we have an affluent society in the West. If there's another depression... who can guarantee that people will turn back to their old faith in science as the way out? They are more likely to turn to fantasy fiction and that will be a real sick society, for sure.

A new type of SF? Yes, I think so. I believe that America and the whole West, has turned the edge of Russian progress. In space travel, for one thing, Russian progress has gone so far and then stuck. They may get to the Moon first, however, the real opening up of space will be Western. In all other fields, too, the West has seen the red light. We have passed our cultural 1933, and a new upbeat is coming. How can this fail to be mirrored by SF?



AMONG MY SOUVENIERS

by

John M Baxter

Off-beat books intrigue me. Subject doesn't matter, just so long as their theme is bizarre, the production novel, or the book a rare edition. For this reason, I usually hang on to every weird item that comes my way, even fanzines, until sheer bulk forces me to dispose of the less attractive items. This morning, I've been going through the unfiled section of this collection, sorting and shelving...a process which has yielded a few comment-worthy publications. So I'll comment. These aren't reviews, of course, just minor observations on some quaint bits of literature.

There's always a lot of talk in fandom about the pulps, meaning the early Astounding, Startling, Thrilling Wonder Stories, etc. But how many people have seen the other pulp publications, featuring material not SFnal? Not a great many, and certainly very few among the younger fans. They would not, for instance, have seen Spicy Western Stories, a magazine put out by Culture Publications(?????). This particular issue is for Feb. 1937, and features the sort of material that gave all pulps, including the SF ones, such a bad reputation in the 30s. The cover is typical...a seminaked girl tied to a post and being whipped by an evil looking cowboy, while her boy friend stands helplessly bound beside her. In color, too. There are nine short stories and a two page comic strip in this issue, with plenty of illustrations, and, as the title suggests, the theme is western adventure yarns with a sado-sexual accent. The comic strip, Polly of the Plains, is a cliff hanger of the old school. As our story opens, Polly, a girl of startling proportions and stacked like the proverbial brick warehouse, has just had all her clothes torn off in a struggle with some Mexican chick. In the fight, she gets a small knife wound in the back and a local vet is called in to treat her, which naturally means that Polly doesn't get back home on time. Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch (that's what it says), Jean, a friend of Polly, sets out to look for her, but is lured into a trap by Pancho, the wicked Mexican bandido. Tying her naked to a chair, he attempts to get information about Polly's whereabouts through strategic use of a burning cigarette. To the accompaniment of Jean's moans, we fade out..."What has happened to Polly? Will Jean submit to her torturer? See the March issue of Spicy Western Stories." Shucks! The nine short stories are typical of pulp fiction... action, sex, sadism, and more action. Drunken cowboys rape dance-hall girls, evil gamblers rape fair innocent virgins, mortgagors wreck their will on the daughters of their clients, strong silent lawmen lose control under the full moon...there are heaving breasts, trembling conical breasts, dusky breasts (Indian girl), and the good old standby...white

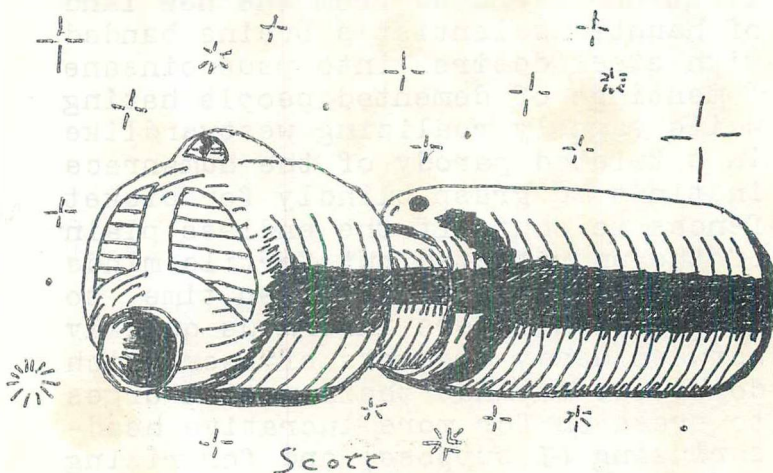


thighs, plus a lot of unequivocal illustrations. In general, loads of fun. Naturally, the magazine is banned in Australia, and I have this copy only through the most excellent luck. Which is a pity, because now I'll never know what happened to Polly.

Another pulp magazine, but one nearer to home... Startling Stories for March 1940. The lead novel is Kuttner's "When New York Vanished" one of those rambling yarns in which anything could happen, as long as it was bizarre. Bob Olson's "The Phantom Teleview" is reprinted, and there are two other shorts, "Station Death" by Oscar Friend, and an early Bester opus "Guinea Pig, Ph. D." Add to this that incredible range of departments...crossword, science bio. notes, Meet The Author (with a very early picture of Kuttner, looking like a sort of sunburned Valentino with moustache), lettercol, Science Question Box, a Guest Editorial by Manly Wade Wellman, and naturally enough, a fanzine review section... one of this issues most interesting features. 13 zines are examined, two from Britian, 10 from the US, and one from Australia! The latter was an excellent zine, edited by Vol Molesworth and containing some hyper material. In the space of eight lines the reviewer manages to make three errors, including mis-spelling the editor's name, the superb in which he lives, and confusing Sidney-side fan Eric Russell with Eric Frank Russell...but wothehell, it's a prozine review isn't it? The thing that impresses me most about these old fanzines is the tremendous durability of the men who were associated with them. Most of the people mentioned in this column are still in SF or fandom and very active in it, too. Harry Warner Jr's SPACEWAYS gets a mention, and here's an early NEW WORLDS, caught at the time when it was a small fanzine edited by Ted Carnell and Arthur C Clarke. Bob Madle, Bob Tucker ("The Benchley of SF" says the reviewer), C S Youd (better known as John Christopher these days), jim Taurasi, Bob Lowndes...they were all active in pubbing at that time and you can still see their names around about fandom, 20 years later. The pre-war fans were built to last.

Anybody interested in the science of hanging...and it is a science...should read The New Handbook of Hanging by Charles Duff. The subject of this little reference book, naturally enough is hanging...its practice, history, philosophy, and art. It contains a handy table of drops and weights which enable the inexperienced executioner to complete his task without the least hitch. There are poems about hanging and famous men, both hanged and hangers are mentioned.

All in all, the subject is covered in a very absorbing and thorough way. However, under this seemingly approving material, the writer is actually criticising the entire system of capital punishment. It is unusual to find the writer's tongue in his cheek for an entire novel-length book, but Duff has managed to do so without getting lockjaw. The result is a strange sort of book...half parody, half reference but all entertaining even if you don't happen to have the hanging habit.



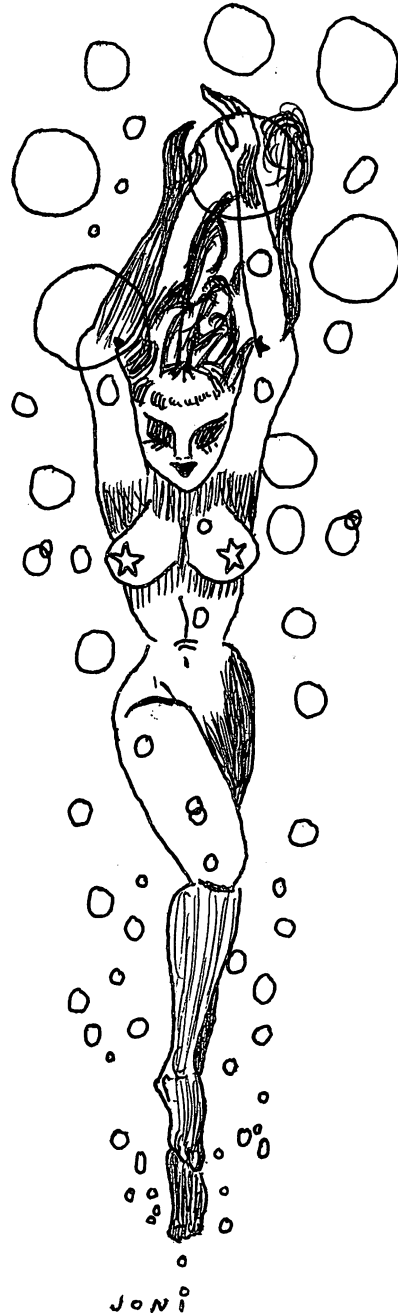
Cartoon Countdown is the book that fandom forgot...at least, I've never seen a review of it nor heard it mentioned by anyone even remotely connected with fannish activities. This Ballantine 35¢-er is a collection of Bernard Wiseman's SF cartoons, most of them pretty good. My favorite is the one where a Russian astronaut orders an alien to... "Take me to your dictator." But they are all funny.

...enough for now. But perhaps it will give you an idea of the good books that you can find. I collect off-beat items...got any to sell?

FLORESCENT LIGHTS by Rog Ebert

Blind eyes; contradiction in itself,
but the way they stare is the worst.

Buzz; go ahead, damn you; buzz above my head like mindless bumble hornets in faithless mutter. I can endure it as I endure the dozens of ever-daily mechanical distractions that forever are sawmilling into my head in rapid but merciless insistence on evermore killing my soft, sweet, human desire to commune with nature in a pawnshop where your state is quickly returned into the warm, quiet glow that first fascinated Edison in that laboratory gas-lit in the dog days (bless them) before the abovementioned omnibuzzes first unhibernated from the new land of haunted scientist's brains banded with steel desires into psuedoinsane fomentings of demented people hating while vaguely realizing westwardlike in a twisted parody of the humanrace instinct to grasp blindly for picket fences to shut off the endless plain of the unprotected but fertile minds that would open up if given time, so the head-shrinkers inform us quickly between heady draughts of beer which doubtless expands their mental urges to press on for more lucrative head-shrinking (I suppose) and for rising to occasions at head-shrinker's July conventions at Miami Beach and Cedar Rapids (the midwestern caucus). Even this is getting us hardly anywhere I suspect, and there is, after all, my work to do (which is to stamp out my personal demons, those damned lights which infect my brain with their all knowing buzzes, see how I mean, eh?)





Par
-secting

ALGIS BUDRYS,

I met Degler once or twice, in Philadelphia circa 1947, and he was very, very quiet and going under another name. He sent me some fanzines ...mostly book for sale lists...as bad as anything I have ever seen, and either because he got no reply or from external causes, disappeared from my ken forever. Sic transit Claudius.

I don't know...maybe Wollheim is right, and one good book makes up for nine bad ones. (Is Avalon's record that good, by the way?) Certainly ACE Books more than make up for their occasional duds, and I have no quarrel with them. To say the least, I think we owe Don Wollheim considerable. But I have the impression that Avalon, even though possessed of a good book for a change, cuts it to a standard length regardless, and heavily rewrite it to suit the (remarkably stupid) audience it envisions, and I find that not salubrious at all. Others may disagree. I certainly don't think that any kind of SF is better than no SF, and, in any case, is that our limit of choices?

Afterthought on Avalon...it seems to me that no one interested in library books, or books in hard covers of any sort, can possibly be as stupid as Avalon thinks they must be. Reading books is a habit limited to a far smaller and loftier portion of the population than it might seem to us who have been around them all our lives, whereas the pabulum to which Avalon reduces its publications seems about on the level of the comics. I think, therefore, that Avalon is actively engaged in shoving the level of the audience downward, and is therefore being pernicious on purpose. The fact that you can sell a book doesn't mean you should, if your only motive is commercial. I don't see that Bouregy is doing us any favors, and therefore I feel no gratitude, much less approval.

Bob Lichtman might have been right about sex in SF, once, though not very. But nowadays, in order to compete with the "Love-Starved Arabs Raped Me Often" magazines, we would have to put in so much ultraredolent garbage that nothing would remain of the SF. I refer you to fetishist, sadomasochistic publication sold under the counter in various Times Square area bookstores for samples of what would have to be done, and has occasionally been done in the SF format. The "true adventure" magazines simply get away with a great deal more than any frankly fictional publication could, and thus push competition beyond the limits of newsstand practicality. We have been beaten before we could start. And these few objections are, of course, only the practical ones.

LYNN HICKMAN,

I agree pretty thoroughly with Don Wollheim. Avalon does publish some poor books by such as Kellam and Silverberg, but I would imagine that these same books would be popular with a lot of early teen-age readers and would get them further interested in SF. Avalon also publishes quite a few books I like. For example, they are now reprinting some of the Otis Adelbert Kline Mass series from the Argosy magazine of the 1930's. It's a pleasure to rersad them and I'm sure there are a lot of collectors that are happy to get them. Avalon also publishes some good DeCamp books. Norm Metcalf should remember that they are trying to please all segments of the reading public that likes SF...not just the critical fan.

I'm one who rates ACE as one of the leaders in the pb SF field. By and large the ACE double SF novel gives the average fan or reader the most for his 35¢. Once again Don can't hit the top with every book but he does come up with quite a fine percentage. Take for example the past few months. Russell, Taine, Anderson, Tucker, and Van Vogh. Good stories all. More power to Don and ACE.

JONI CORNELL,

A SF story should...

- A) have cause for speculation
- B) make you stop and think
- C) state a theory

...or it is not good. Space opera is generally worthless crud, and for children. If the juvenile audience wants SF it will probably buy a comic book, not a magazine.

DONALD WOLLHEIM,

I have been stirred by Joe's article so that I am thinking of writing one on the general subject. It is a little known fact that the Futurians were supporters of Degler...Claude was a fanatical supporter of GHU, me, and the FSNY (as a search through his magazines would show) and we always reciprocate in kind. On the other hand we qualified our vote of support of the Cosmic Circle with an unwritten codicil. Our vote said that we were for him up to the instant he crossed the borders of Greater New York City personally and at that instant we would be opposed to him.

You will note, if you are a student of these things in fan history, that Degler never did violate that rule during his public career. He never did come to NYC and I don't recall ever having met him.

But, as I said, I may write an article one of these days setting forth my own view again that Claude Degler was a rare opportunity for fandom and that fandom crucified him instead of recognizing him as its savior. I said it once before in a fan article entitled "The Necessary Monomaniac" but it's worth rewriting. All that's crummy and pointless and sick and beat in modern fandom is...maybe...due to rejecting Degler.

A J BUDRYS on UFO'S

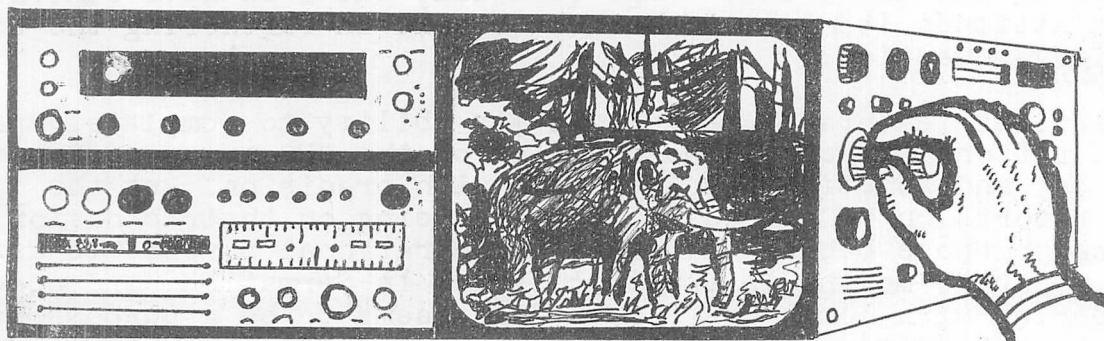
I'm not sure that UFO's exist at all, except as an artifact of limited human knowledge. But for the purpose of this discussion, we can neglect that alternative and tackle the problem of what the UFO's are if they are, indeed, something other than perfectly natural phenomenon. I don't have an answer to that large question, but I do have something else...an attitude it might be useful to take in furthering the solution of that large question.

The salient feature of the UFO is its ability to completely paralyze the human rational process. The behavior of the UFO in any given observed case can be, and sometimes is, reported with precision. But the collated sighting reports on UFO's, while often agreeing on their behavior, show no rational purpose behind UFO activity; a rational purpose is assumed... they are reported moving in straight lines, in formation, and occasionally as interfering with human traffic in what seems to be a purposeful manner but cannot be deduced. The big question about UFO's is 'What are they trying to accomplish, what do they want, and what do we stand to gain or lose by it?' and, to date, the best answer we have is the rather weak one that they are 'observing' us...that is to say, they're up in the sky and the sky looks down on all human activity, so we assume they, too, are looking, though we have no proof of that. This is like assuming that someone in a forest is 'observing' the wildlife, the only facts available being that the someone is in the forest and does, occasionally, startle an unwary squirrel. In some ways, the 'observing' thesis is very like the reaction of the old maid who assumes that if she did not pull down her windowshade a crowd would gather outside her bedroom window every night. The people going by on the street may have some other purpose entirely; some other destination, and some other preoccupation.

So let's see if we can perhaps evolve some kind of working approach which may have no correspondence with the facts of the matter but at least permits us to think and pursue a rational inquiry, and which does correspond with the facts as we know them.

Two significant features of UFO activity are that (A) There have been no reported contacts between spacecraft personnel and human beings functioning in human society. Every contact report I am aware of comes from an individual who cannot do more than limp along in society on his own unaided resources, and who has only marginal influence over any human being other than one of his own type. Therefore, the personnel of these (conjectural) "aero-space craft" have yet to make contact with the human

race, after all these years. (B) UFO activity as reported by observers of UFO's in flight, rather than as vehicles for Visitors With A Message, is confined to formation flying and aerobatics. Year after year, the UFO's have been displaying their ability to make hairpin turns, chandelies, Immelman's, barrel rolls, etc., at disastrous angles and accelerations. They seem to be flying no recognizable search or patrol pattern, and they do not seem to concentrate above interesting human activity with any degree of consistency. They have occasionally been reported as flocking around human activity which, to humans, seems as if it would interest intelligent individuals from some other planet, but they have ignored other and equally interesting events, by those standards, and have not, even when not ignoring them, seemed to be studying them with anything a human being would interpret as efficient purposefulness. It seems to me that UFO interest is displayed at random; that, if anything, they are not studying us but trying to attract our attention to their superior skill and technology...for no reason but that they wish to brag about them.



Johnson

Now, we are human beings, thinking in human ways, and if we are to ever communicate with aliens, we will have to do so in human terms, or terms which are sufficiently both human and alien. So let us postulate, for a moment, that the UFO's are "aero-space craft"...that is, piloted, dirigible, intelligently guided vehicles, with 'intelligent' meaning what it means to human beings, and let us imagine that human beings are piloting them. On that basis, how does their behavior explain the rationality of their pilots?

With regard to activity (A), they either have not ever contacted a human individual at all, or else have contacted only individuals who are themselves rather out of touch with the main body of the human race.

Feature (B) is interesting because it has a parallel not so much in abnormal psychology case reports as it does in recent mass behavior on the part of an entire human culture. This business of aerobatic displays to no visible purpose is duplicated in reports on Japanese Naval Air Force pilots during World War II, made by Occidental observers, and has its roots in the general inferiority complex which leads to compulsion toward "face"...a display of ferocity, martial skill, and excellent equipment, intended to impress or overawe the enemy; apparently, the psychic satisfaction gained can be so great that combat is not always necessary as a crowning touch. Any number of Japanese American "dogfights" were broken off by the Japanese before they ever got to the shooting stage,

with apparently no loss of face being felt by the Japanese pilots involved. Inasmuch as the purpose of fighter aircraft in war is to interdict the enemy missions, and inasmuch as these stunting displays did nothing or little to accomplish that purpose, this sort of behavior is functionally psychotic, for all that it may be imminently sane to someone not Occidental. (Within the function of war, it is not sane to save your neck on any particular occasion...the function of war is to ensure long-term safety, and as inability to subordinate the immediate gain to the ultimate purpose is insane in any context.)

There is something about UFO behavior which, however, stretches all excuses to the (human) breaking point and beyond. That is the unconscionably long time this sort of saber-waving has been going on. It could be explained by an inferiority complex of truly staggering proportions, but such a complex would call for other behavior which the UFO's have not displayed. They have not, for example, intensified their efforts to get a rise out of us. Our lack of effective reaction ought to have demanded that for their own psychic satisfaction these (conjecturally) inferiority ridden people step up the nose-thumbing, and progress to dead-cat-throwing, so that they could then skitter home giggling happily about how mad they had gotten us. This they have not done, despite the lack of the necessary feedback. No matter how large their (conjectural) inferiority complex, the only thing that would explain their maintaining their old pattern of activity at the same general level for so long a time, would be a rising incidence of reaction on our part. But in fact the reaction is obviously growing bored; as far as I know, we no longer scramble aircraft to chase reported UFO's as a matter of course, and we no longer put UFO sightings on the air except as occasional humorous features, or on the front pages of our newspapers.

So that though there seems to be some sort of human explanation for UFO behavior at first glance, further examination shows less and less understandable response from the UFO's, rather than more.

I would say that for human purposes, whatever capacity for alien logic and motivation we might be willing to allow (conjectural) aliens, UFO's are not intelligently guided, and therefore, for useful human purposes, these are not "craft", though they may be constructions, and alien constructions at that; if they are not...as seems much more likely to me... some sort of natural phenomenon. Whether they are guided by occupants or not...even if they are...these occupants are not 'intelligent' in any meaning that would permit us to communicate with them or derive their motivations from their behavior. Therefore, it is poor engineering for us to tackle the problem of the UFO from the motivational end. It seems to me that the likeliest area of progress is in regarding them and reacting to them as if they were natural phenomena; certainly whether these UFO's are piloted or not, someday we shall meet a race so alien that the "natural phenomenon" frame of reference will be the only ones humans can use in dealing with them. UFO behavior can superficially be explained in terms of psychosis, but even that explanation breaks down. So there seems little for us to do but to think of UFO's as something like ball lightning, anomalous cloud formations along anomalous paths of air motion, or fireflies, or the souls of the dead, or the dislocations caused in the fabric of the universe by the human practice of filling little glass containers with vacuum. One thing they ain't, or might as well not be, is "aero-space craft".

THE PERFECT SQUELCH

By Gerry de la Ree

Teenagers have a certain confidence bordering on cockiness, and looking back some two decades to my own highschool days it almost makes me shudder to think of some of things we did.

In the early 1940's I was publishing a SF magazine, SUN SPOTS. My co-editors at the time were Ron Gaetz and Bob Blanchard, two other members of the Solaroid Club of Westwood, N.J.

We were all in the same age group...15-16...and took a great pride in what I would now consider a rather amateurish product. Still, for a little more than one year we had a certain advantage over most other fanzines being published...we were able to print our magazine in the plant of a weekly newspaper for which I was writing scholastic sports.

Such printing costs would have been prohibitive to most fans, including us, had it not been for this connection. We offset the costs by cleaning up the print shop once a week, as well as doing our own make-up on the magazine.

Unfortunately, the quality of our material could not match the quality of our format. In a search for better material, I did one of those things that now makes me shudder. I wrote to Hugo Gernsback and requested an article from him.

The reply, dated July 31, 1941:

"Many thanks for your communication of the 30th, requesting I write an article for your science fiction publication, "Sun Spots".

I shall be happy to supply you with such an article, at the rate of 2¢ per word, and if this is agreeable to you, please let me hear from you by return mail."

To say we were almost stunned would be putting it mildly. Fanzine editors just didn't pay for articles. And 2¢ a word was twice as much as the better authors in the field were getting for their work at the time.

Had we been older and more considerate, one of us would no doubt have replied by explaining the situation to Gernsback. Instead, in a moment of inspired genius, I sat down at the typewriter and banged out this blunt reply;

Westwood, N.J.
August 2, 1941

NUTS.

Blanchard

Gaetz

de la Ree

Three days later there arrived an envelope from Gernsback's New York office. Inside was our letter, on which Hugo had made a few alterations in his familiar red pencil. The letter now read;

3
NUTS.

Blanchard

Gaetz

de la Ree

Agreed...but why tell me? H.G.

PARSECTIONINGS

Lately I've been pondering the thought...what if someone donated money to bring Willis over and then discovered that he loathed the man?

Anyone ever notice that Betty Kujawa's question mark key stutters?

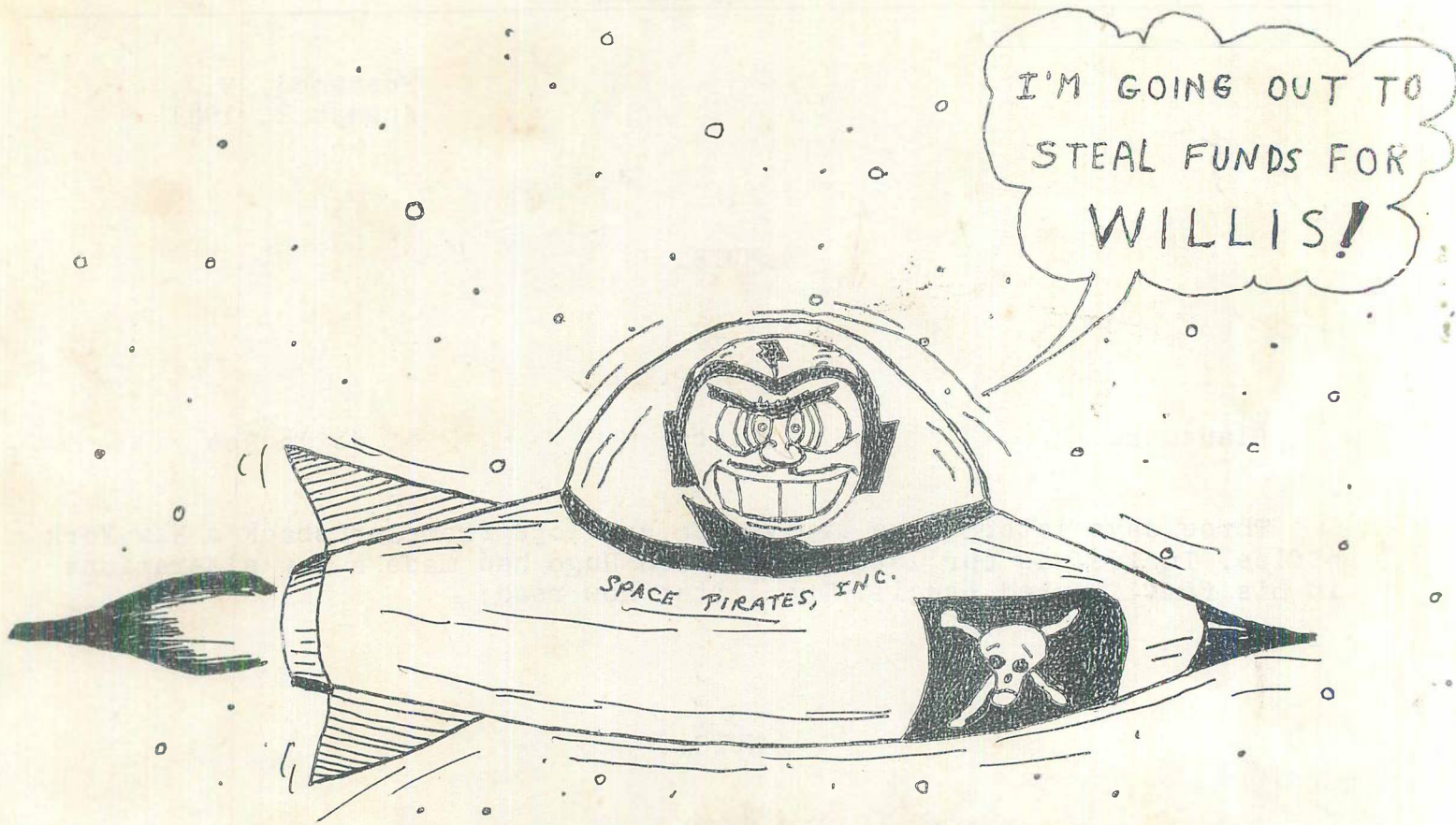
PARSECTION's hat comes off to Jeff Wanshel for a statement made in an article for PILIKIA... "Chessie (a cat) was often seen sleeping on such comfortable items as the Benford edited VOID. I'm sure he would not sleep on VOID now. Probably get poisoned staples in his side."

Ghu is the only true God, and Wohlheim is his profit.

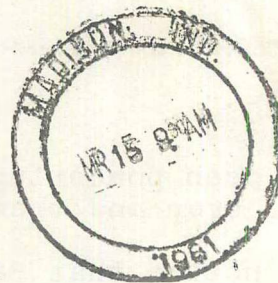
Again, HOW ABOUT A HUGO FOR FAN ARTISTS?

Overseas fans who have not contributed an article, money, or fanzine in trade are looking at their last copy of PAR.

Likewise for you independent Americans.



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